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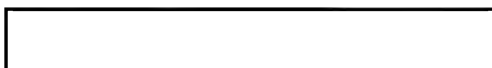
Cease-Fire Developments

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State Department review completed

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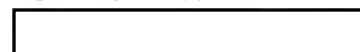
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25X1

5 June 1973



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Cease-Fire Developments

25X1

CONTENTS

5 June 1973

SOUTH VIETNAM 1

The Military Situation
Latest Communist Instructions on
Cease-Fire
Thieu Orders Reopening of Major
Highway
Hoa Hao Leader Softens Anti-Communist
Attitude

CAMBODIA. 4

The Military Situation

SOUTH VIETNAMThe Military Situation

The localized flare-ups that have occurred around the country in the past few days appear to be the result of government efforts to get a foothold in Communist areas before a new cease-fire. The heaviest fighting has been in Diem Tuong Province, where the Communists ambushed and mauled elements of a South Vietnamese regiment trying to move into a long time Viet Cong base area near the district capital of Cai Lay.

25X1

25X1

The Communists have let up on their ground attacks but are continuing artillery and rocket fire against scattered government positions near the city. South Vietnamese commanders throughout the country are keeping their units on precautionary alert for a Communist "land-grab," but most apparently do not believe the Communists will attempt it--at least not on a wide scale. There are indications, in fact, that the Communists have pulled back or restricted the movement of some main force units.

25X1

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Latest Communist Instructions on "Cease-fire"

The Communists apparently are not planning any widespread military action pending the outcome of the next session of the Paris talks between Le Duc Tho and Dr. Kissinger. In a briefing for provincial cadre on 28 May, a COSVN spokesman reportedly said that the coming talks will "clarify" several points of the January cease-fire, to the benefit of the Communists. He added that the party committee will

5 June 1973

"await the results" before issuing additional guidance, since Saigon "may go back on its word" as he claimed it did last October.

The Communists' primary task, meanwhile, is still to resist Saigon's efforts to "encroach upon the liberated areas," and main force units are to maintain territorial control "as it is today" rather than "try to expand it." The spokesman warned that it might be necessary for Communist forces to recapture a few "selected" areas of "strategic importance" before a final agreement is reached on the demarcation of territories. He cautioned, however, that starting an "all-out offensive" like the land-grabbing effort that accompanied the ceasefire agreement in late January would be "politically unprofitable."

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Thieu Orders Reopening of Major Highway

According to Military Region 3 commander General Minh, President Thieu has ordered Route 13 reopened to An Loc, north of Saigon, before noon on 8 June. Minh told the US consul general in Bien Hoa he expects to begin the operation by tomorrow and it will take an army division with ranger and air support to "get the job done." Minh also said he expects "opposition" from the Communists but is "confident" that the operation will succeed. Although Minh has found reasons to sidetrack previous orders to reopen some 20 miles of highway held by the Communists between Lai Khe and An Loc, the consul general believes the stress on corridors and delineation of borders in the current round of talks in Paris may have prompted Saigon to order a serious effort to reopen the roadway.

25X1

25X1

Hoa Hao Leader Softens Anti-Communist Attitude

Retired general Lam Thanh Nguyen, a prominent leader of the normally hard-line anti-Communist Hoa

5 June 1973

Hao sect, told US Embassy officers last weekend that the Hoa Hao must find a way to end the fighting with the Viet Cong. He thinks that the Thieu government should cooperate, and asserted that Saigon's intransigence was making a compromise arrangement unnecessarily difficult.

Nguyen apparently has considerable influence among the Hoa Hao, but it is not clear how many members of the sect share his views on the peace issue.

25X1

5 June 1973

-3-

CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

Communist activity on 4 and 5 June was limited to light probes against government positions along Routes 3 and 26, south and west of Phnom Penh. On 5 June, the government began a five-battalion sweep operation just north of Tram Khnar near Route 3, but at last report had made little progress. A similar operation along Route 26 has also made scant progress. Repairs to Route 5 northwest of Phnom Penh are almost complete, and the first convoy to use the roadway since early April is scheduled tentatively for 6 June.

25X1

5 June 1973